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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000424

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SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: AFGHANISTAN, ARMS SALES AND THE  
ARCTIC SEA HIJACKING

REF: USNATO 355

Classified By: Charge John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitri Rogozin used the September 30 meeting of the NATO-Russia Council to press Moscow's agenda on Afghanistan and plug potential Russian military sales to NATO, while attempting to avoid comment on the mystery surrounding the MV Arctic Sea hijacking. Rogozin warning against reconciling with Afghan extremist leaders and reiterating that Russia believes it deserves to be included in discussions among contributors to ISAF. He used a presentation by the director of the Russian agency that regulates military sales to say that Russia wants to conclude a MOU on sales to NATO in time for what Moscow hopes will be a December visit by the NATO SecGen. Rogozin gave a short briefing on Russia's apprehension of the hijacked MV Arctic Sea, criticizing Europe's "failure to respond accordingly" to the situation and denying speculation that the ship's cargo was illegal arms. Rogozin attempted to meet expressions of concern by Poland and others over recent Russian military exercises with a humorous response, only to be challenged by the Czech Republic to remember that military activity sends a political message. Rogozin did not raise the EU's Georgia report, which had been released three hours prior to this meeting. END SUMMARY.

Post-Election Afghanistan  
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12. (C) The September 30 meeting of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) began with a presentation on the election in Afghanistan by the Deputy Secretary General. Norway recommended that the international community establish benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the next Afghan government and "act decisively" if expectations were not met. Germany suggested that an upcoming international conference on Afghanistan determine concrete objectives for the new government and welcomed Russian involvement in planning the conference.

13. (C) Russian Ambassador Rogozin said that simply carrying out the Afghan election was an achievement, despite irregularities, and that there was real competition among candidates. Russia thought the initiative for an international conference should come from the Afghans and the event should only be held after a new government takes power, otherwise the international community will continue to be the "nanny" that takes care of Afghanistan's problems and prevents the Afghans from taking responsibility for themselves. He raised Russia's oft-expressed concern with

Afghanistan's national reconciliation process, warning against any type of accommodation with the leaders of extremist groups, but allowing for compromise with lower level leaders and "moderate elements."

¶4. (C) Rogozin stressed the need for a more in-depth discussion of Afghanistan at the NRC, and hoped that members would provide sufficiently high-level officials for the reinforced Af-Pak discussion scheduled for the October 21 NRC Ambassadorial. He reiterated that Russia thought the Afghan-related assistance it had provided bilaterally to the U.S. and other countries warranted Russia's inclusion in discussions among those assisting ISAF. Rogozin stressed that Russia wanted the ISAF operation in Afghanistan to be seen through to its successful conclusion, otherwise the country would become an even greater problem for its neighbors. He reminded the NRC of the threat to Russia from Afghan narcotics, comparing heroine to weapons of mass destruction.

#### Military-Technical Cooperation

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¶5. (C) Rogozin introduced a presentation by Mikhail Dmitriev, Director of the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS), as coming on the "threshold" of deeper NATO-Russia military cooperation. He said that Russia looked forward to concluding a MOU with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) in time for a potential December visit to Moscow by the NATO Secretary General. Rogozin also said he hoped to have representatives

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of other military sales organizations, including Rosoboronexport, come to NATO in the future.

¶6. (C) Dmitriev gave a general overview of FSVTS' responsibility for overseeing export controls and granting licenses for Russian sales of weapons and military material. He highlighted previous Russian sales of helicopters for use in Afghanistan and by UN peacekeeping missions. He also explained Russian capacity to provide NATO and NATO members with various types of helicopters, crew training, parts and servicing, as well as military transport aircraft. Rogozin added that several Russian commercial firms were active in the area.

¶7. (C) Germany said that it looked forward to Russia concluding an agreement with NAMSA, while Spain asked how NATO and Russia could "concretely" follow-up on this discussion. Hungary welcomed military cooperation, which would help "reset or re-launch" the NRC. DCM Heffern noted that the proposed MOU was still under review by NAMSA legal advisers, and that the U.S. looked forward to reviewing their recommendations and resolving the matter expeditiously.

#### MV Arctic Sea Hijacking

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¶8. (C) Rogozin thanked NATO for providing information that helped Russia locate the MV Arctic Sea, but gave a disappointing presentation on the August hijacking of the ship that avoided any hint of the mysterious circumstances surrounding this episode (reftel). He began his account with the apprehension of the ship and taking into custody of the hijackers, claiming there were four Estonians and four Latvians, two of whom also had Russian citizenship. Rogozin complained that the ship was hijacked in European waters and sailed around the continent without being stopped by authorities. He cited a lack of international coordination in the matter, but offered no suggestions on how to improve international efforts to combat piracy.

¶9. (C) Rogozin responded to Denmark's question about the nature of the ship's cargo with a desultory explanation of Russia's efforts to locate the ship before adding that

Russian and other authorities did not find any suspect cargo on board. DCM Heffern drew the conclusion that NATO and Russia should enhance counter-piracy cooperation.

#### Russian Military Exercises

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¶10. (C) Poland raised its concerns over the recent Russian military exercises Zapad and Logoda, citing Russia's failure to invite observers to the Logoda exercise, and the large scale and offensive scenario of Zapad. Poland also noted that Zapad was held just 20 kilometers from the Polish border. Estonia and Latvia supported Poland's position, and Canada asked Russia to brief the NRC on the exercises. Italy hoped that as NATO and Russia moved ahead on military cooperation, the gap between the progress made on political relations and still distant military relationship could be bridged.

¶11. (C) Rogozin appeared to relish the introduction of controversy into the NRC, responding that he was "beginning to think our whole meeting would be rather boring. This is a nice dessert, with a little bit of spice." He dismissed the idea of a briefing to the NRC, saying that it should be done at a meeting of Ministers of Defense, but offered to submit specific information on the exercise to the NRC. He gave a weak defense of the scenario for Zapad, but rallied to comment that Russia could have invited an enemy military force into the country for training purposes, but history has shown that such circumstances end in "defeat and shame" for Russia's enemies. Rogozin said that he had hoped for "greater forgetfulness" about Cold War phobias within NATO.

¶12. (C) The Czech Republic PermRep jumped in, saying that Rogozin's comments "provoked" him to respond that as we go forward with enhanced political ties we must remember that whatever is done militarily also has a political meaning. The D/SYG added that in the spirit of transparency, the NRC looked forward to Russian information on the exercises.

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